

MELTON & OAKHAM WATERWAYS SOCIETY ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

SATURDAY 1 NOVEMBER 2025

Minutes of the 28th Annual General Meeting held at 10.00am on Saturday 1 November 2025 at Sysonby Knoll Hotel, Melton Mowbray.

The Chair, Sharon Butcher, welcomed everyone to the AGM.

1. Apologies

Apologies were received from Mike Handford.

2. Adoption of Minutes from 2024 AGM (2 November 2024)

The minutes of the 2024 AGM were adopted as a true record of the meeting.

3. Matters Arising from Chair's Report and Accounts 2024/5

A) Grant for silt removal.

B) We are waiting for the Town Estate to agree to the placement of the removed silt so that the Water Framework Directive can be completed.

4. Chair's Report

Leicestershire County Council have taken two million pounds out of the Environment budget to put into flood prevention. MOWS have hosted County Councillors showing them the potential problems on the waterways around Melton. SB is attending a meeting on 4 November which may result in money being available to clear the silt from under Wilton Bridge.

There is a general feeling that the Environmental Agency operate double standards in the way they operate and rules they force onto our organisation. Recent Environmental Agency work at the Melton Country Park was mentioned.

Three and a half million pounds will be available from new Town Culture Grants shortly for local authorities to bid for. Melton Borough Council have a bid writer in place and an initial committee meeting has been arranged so MOWS must be aware that future grants could be available to enhance existing work with Brian Fare and the supply of educational canal information boards.

Melton Borough Council have found a 1907 Act of Parliament that allows a licence to be charged for boats using the waterway. This is likely to cost the society £250 per boat. Melton Borough Council have said this cost could be paid by the Council to give us more of a chance to operate the rowing boats as a money-making venture.

The main problem is the lack of personnel to operate the scheme on a more regular basis in 2026.

Mike Patterson said that usually the licensing authority has the responsibility for the upkeep of the river facilities.

Mick Clowes stated that it is usually down to the local authority to organise the licensing of boats for hire under public health regulations. He felt that we needed one good season of fairly regular hire to see if it is a financially viable scheme.

Geof Malone added the following, that local authorities are given the option of charging a licence fee from the 1907 Act of Parliament, some do, some don't. We operate above the national standards of safety and there is no national scheme for rowing boat licensing. He also added that we must not forget that the rowing boats are an added attraction for the town.

SB said that at every meeting concerning improvement to the town centre, MOWS are mentioned because of the work that they do to enhance the existing waterways. SB is soon to meet with the Council Leader to try and get the Borough Council to pay for the licence fees for four rowing boats which will last for four years.

SB asked the Secretary to create a letter to the Council Leader and the Licensing Officer asking for financial help for the Society which will be received before their meeting.

Meeting voted unanimously for this to happen. (Secretary completed and sent the letter to SB the next day). Mike Patterson queried the high cost (£250) of the individual row boat safety inspections.

5. Treasurer's Report and Presentation of 2024/25 Accounts

Profit & Loss Account:

In the financial figures for the year 1 September 2024 to 31 August 2025, the income that MOWS has received from the grants and the expenditure made is included. There is more detail on grants received and expenditure in the separate chart, including the balances at the beginning of the year and at the end of the financial year. It can be clearly seen that on the 31 August 2025, MOWS has received more funds in grants than spent and this grant income is deferred until all the money is spent. The difference between grants received and grants spent is about £3250. This means that in the Profit & Loss Account, although it looks like MOWS has made a healthy profit of £3425, the true situation is that the profit is only £178.23.

Our income must cover the regular expenses because otherwise we would be running at a loss. The more significant expenses are insurance for equipment and boats and the £500 MMTE lease for the land on which stands the pontoon and landing stage.

Our subscriptions this year seem to have gone down again for various reasons. We do try to remind the members that the subscriptions are due and some of them do respond. But we have had a few new members. Similarly, our book sales have gone down considerably in comparison with last year's but we've made up our income with the boat rentals and some PayPal donations as well as our regular yearly donations. There is also Gift Aid tax repayment, so we are very grateful to the members who do complete the gift aid forms and I think this is something that we must encourage more of we fully intend to pursue this in the New Year. We also received income from the sale of equipment.

Balance Sheet:

Now looking at the Balance Sheet, the bank Current Account looks quite healthy. However, the bank balance is due mainly to the grants that we have obtained during the financial years 2023/24 and 2024/25 and the balances of unspent grant monies at the end of our financial year (31 August 2025).

We have purchased a new boat this year with part of a Severn Trent Community fund. Its value has been included in the Stock Figure.

The carry over grant is treated as a liability, that is the total which is still unspent.

Actions for this new financial year, is to try to encourage new membership, encourage members, who are eligible, to sign Gift Aid forms, and try to get new grant money.

See also the attached Accounts spreadsheet presented at the meeting.

6. Election of Committee Members

The existing committee wished to stand again and this was proposed and voted for en bloc by the meeting.

The co-opted member of the committee, Jake Harrison, was proposed, seconded and officially voted on the committee.

7. Grant Applications and Expenditures

See Mike Patterson's report on Grant Applications and Expenditures – document attached.

8. AOB / Open Discussion

Insertion of Rod Axons report on the Temporary Prohibition on Pedestrian footpath number 156.

The meeting then enjoyed a canal/waterways quiz by Geof Malone.

The Chair (Sharon Butcher) thanked all the Society members for attending and officially closed the meeting at 11.55am.